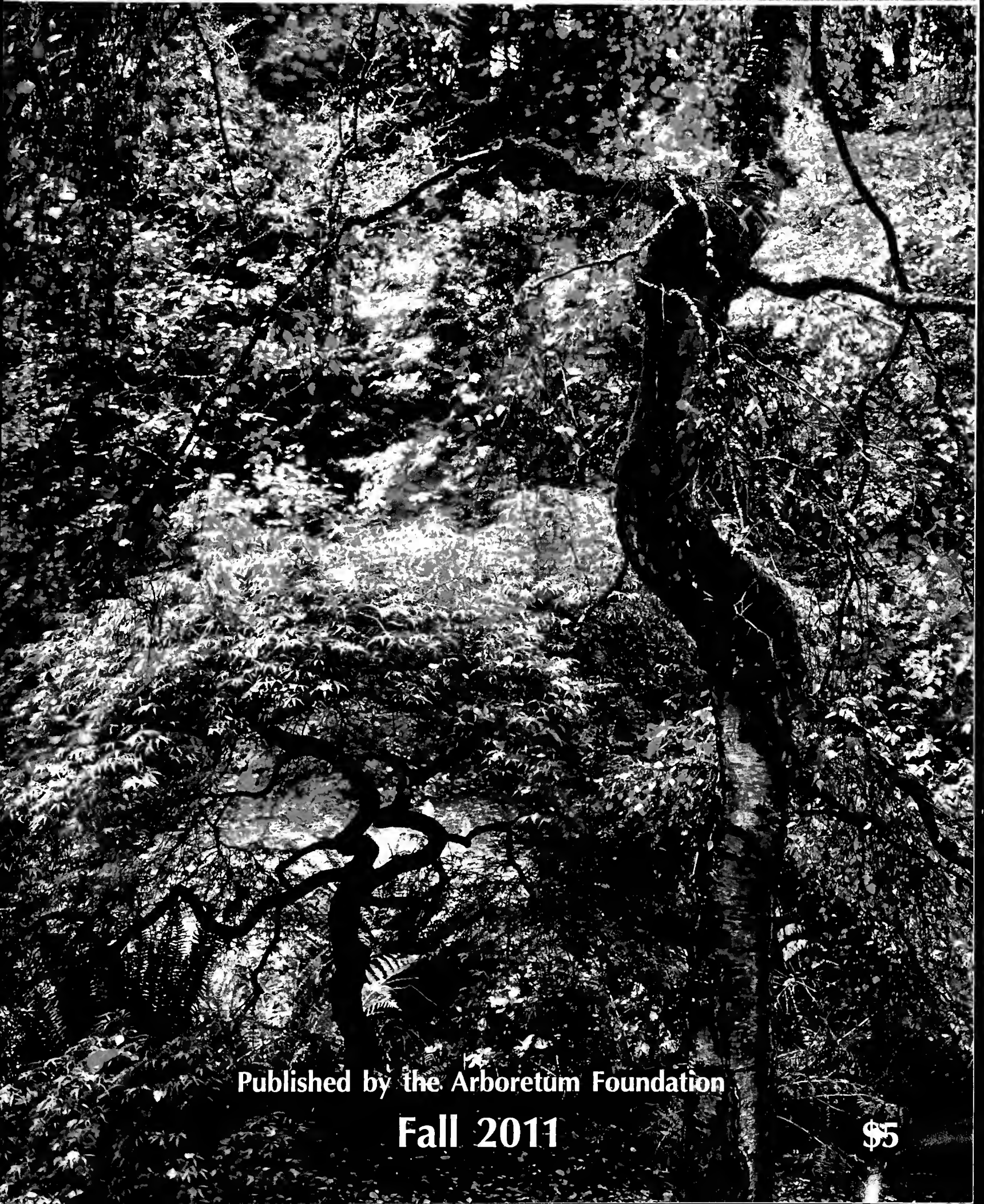


Washington Park Arboretum

BULLETIN



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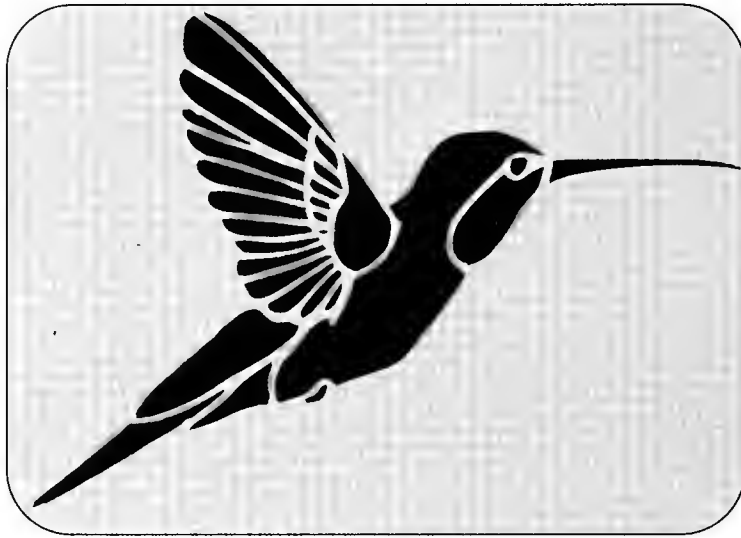
ABOVE: Photographer Jeff Krewson gives "Bulletin" readers an armchair tour of the Arboretum in fall beginning on page 24. Here, Jeff says of the tree foliage, "That red had to be captured and the form and the rest of the foliage is like icing on the cake."

ON THE COVER: "The way the trunks of the two trees play off each other drew me irresistibly. Then it was a matter of creating balance and interest with the surrounding plants," says Jeff.

The Hummingbird

*M*agic happens when people pull together as a team to accomplish something special. We see it during natural disasters. Sometimes it happens in even the smallest of crises and transforms how we relate to one another—as it did early this summer.

One late afternoon I was working in my office at the Visitors Center and I heard Sue Ewens, the volunteer Gift Shop manager, worrying about something. So, I went out to find out what was wrong. A rufous hummingbird was trapped in the lobby, struggling



to find a way through the fixed glass rooftop. Sue was trying to help it to escape. I joined her. Pretty soon, Sue and I were jerry-rigging things to try to coax the bird out the door. We got a ladder. Then Randall Hitchin, the University's Plant Collections Manager, came by and we asked him to get a second ladder. Then staff member Gregg Cato came in to help, too. We worked for two hours as the bird got more and more tired. Time was running out. But, each effort gave us a new idea. Finally, Sue put a mesh jewelry bag on some wire plant stakes from the Gift Shop to create a makeshift butterfly net. Randall stood on the very top step of the tallest ladder with the net and Gregg shooed the bird toward him with the feather duster on a long pole, extended all the way out. It took several precarious tries swiping at the bird with the net. But Randall got it, and twisted the handle to snap the opening shut. The bird screeched as he brought it down and we went outside to watch as he set it free and it flew away. Triumph. We did it. We

cheered and gave each other high-fives and hugs. What awesome teamwork!

And, the magic continued. The shared experience of saving the bird has brought Sue and me much closer together. Randall, whose position was cut to halftime due to

budget cuts at the University of Washington, has just joined our Foundation team as our new Outreach and Volunteer Manager. His knowledge of our collection and deep love for the Arboretum are wonderful assets for us. And, in the little bird's honor, our Display Garden at this year's Flower and Garden Show will be a bird-friendly habitat, from marsh to upland forest, featuring plants that grow here in the Arboretum. And, for the first time, Seattle Audubon will partner with us to create the display garden and serve as some of our docents.

That little hummingbird left us quite a legacy. Pure magic! ♡

Cheers,

Paige Miller

Paige Miller, Executive Director,
Arboretum Foundation

Rust Belt Redux: Cleveland Area Gardens and Landscapes

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY JANINE ANDERSON



Clevelanders are sensitive about the image of their city, and rightly so; comments about Cleveland are often unflattering. Its inclusion on the list of cities undergoing industrial decline (the “Rust Belt”) does little to enhance its reputation, and a 1969 fire on the heavily polluted Cuyahoga River, which winds through the city, further dimin-



ished its stature. The fire was a factor in the creation of the Clean Water Act and Environmental Protection Agency. Because of measures enacted following the fire, the Cuyahoga River has evolved from a waterway thick with oil-soaked debris to a river teeming with fish and other aquatic species—and one that provides recreational opportunities for Northeast Ohio.

ABOVE: Architectural elements and a bold color palette transform a landscape bordering a Georgian-style home in Shaker Heights. **INSET:** White oak (*Quercus alba*) on the campus of Case Western Reserve University remains an important hardwood for floors and other applications.



This past June, Cleveland hosted the annual conference of the Association of Professional Landscape Designers. Conference organizers were anxious to share and show off their city, and to dispel negative images that have lingered for decades. Owing to its industrial heritage, Cleveland has had economic challenges in recent years, but it also has much to offer—especially to a visitor interested in gardens and landscapes. I saw much of what makes Cleveland “rock,” including the iconic Rock & Roll Hall of Fame designed by I.M. Pei and the University Circle Area, which houses Cleveland Clinic, Case Western Reserve University, and numerous museums, concert halls and parks. During the conference, I made three visits to the Cleveland Botanical Garden and toured 14 exceptional (and varied) private gardens in the Cleveland area. This experience gave me an appreciation of Cleveland—and of its landscapes.

Big Trees Everywhere!

One of the first things one notices when touching down in Cleveland is the amazing array of huge and often healthy-looking, deciduous hardwood trees, in addition to a large number

Native Northern Catalpa (*Catalpa speciosa*) in a Cleveland Heights garden is valued mainly for its showy flowers.

of native conifers such as spruce, cypress, hemlock, fir and pine.

It is not surprising that trees in the Cleveland area would be larger than those in the Northwest. Cleveland was already heavily settled when the Seattle area was being clear-cut for timber and development. What is striking, however, is the variety of native species. Among the many genera represented in the region are *Quercus* (oak), *Juglans* (walnut), *Gleditsia*, *Acer* (maple), *Crataegus* (hawthorn), *Robinia*, *Salix* (willow), *Liriodendron* (tulip tree), *Cercis* (redbud), *Cornus* (dogwood), *Tilia*, *Betula* (birch), *Platanus* (sycamore), *Ulmus* (elm), *Carya* (hickory), *Fraxinus* (ash), *Castanea* (chestnut), *Fagus* (beech) and *Catalpa*. This is an impressive list when compared with the relatively few deciduous hardwoods (such as black cottonwood, big-leaf maple and red alder) native to the Pacific Northwest.

The Cleveland area has at least 11 species of native oak—white (*Quercus alba*), bur (*Q. macrocarpa*), swamp white (*Q. bicolor*), chinquapin (*Q. muehlenbergii*), dwarf chinquapin (*Q. prinoides*), black (*Q. velutina*), northern red (*Q. rubra*), pin (*Q. palustris*), northern pin (*Q. ellipsoidalis*), scarlet (*Q. coccinea*) and shingle (*Q. imbricaria*)—and 10 species of willow—pussy (*Salix discolor*), satiny (*S. pellita*), black (*S. nigra*), shining (*S. lucida*), peachleaf (*S. amygdaloides*), sandbar (*S. exigua*), balsam (*S. pyrifolia*), slender (*S. petiolaris*), heartleaf (*S. eriocephala*) and Bebb's (*S. bebbiana*).

Native hardwoods—both large tree forms and shrub-sized varieties—abound in natural areas, parks and gardens. In addition to adding beauty, they shade streets and homes; provide food, habitat and shelter for birds and other wildlife; clean the air; and are valuable economically for their wood, fruits and other commercial properties.



Huge hostas, Japanese forest grass (*Hakonechloa macra*), ferns, Eastern dogwood and more line the entry to a traditional home in Shaker Heights.

about half the precipitation—and with colder temperatures, not all of its winter precipitation is in the form of rain. The roses must appreciate the difference, as they are large, luscious, and seemingly free of disease, with few signs of black spot, rust or any of the other maladies that afflict roses in the Pacific Northwest.

Cleveland Botanical Garden

At only 10 acres, the Cleveland Botanical Garden is small by 230-acre

University of Washington Botanical Gardens (UWBG) standards, yet it has much to offer. Located in University Circle, Cleveland's cultural district, the garden has several themed gardens, including an award-winning children's garden, an herb garden, a rose garden, a Japanese garden, a woodland garden, a restorative garden and a perennial garden. A series of home-inspiration gardens showcase outdoor rooms designed to provide ideas for home gardeners.

A striking entry building, designed by Graham Gund Architects of Cambridge, MA, opened in 2003. It houses a gift shop, a restaurant, research and classroom facilities, and an 18,000-square-foot-conservatory with two separate areas that recreate the spiny desert of Madagascar and the rainforest of Costa Rica. Included in the exhibit are more than 350 species of exotic plants—as well as more than 50 species of butterflies, insects, birds, reptiles and amphibians.

Landscape Design Features

Cleveland gardens range from traditional and conservative to arty and innovative. Many landscapes remain faithful to the plans that were created when the homes were built, often nearly

Plant Highlights

We in the temperate Northwest are often rather smug about the wide variety of plants we can grow in our gardens. It's true, we are blessed, but that does not mean that other areas cannot grow many plants well, and sometimes better, than we can.

Among the many wonderful herbaceous plants thriving in Cleveland gardens, hostas have to top the list. They are huge and healthy, and there are many different varieties. Oddly, they are often seen in sunny sites, and despite high summer temperatures, they look great. A mention of slugs and snails brings puzzled looks to the faces of area gardeners and designers. Apparently, slugs are rare or nonexistent in Cleveland.

Many other herbaceous plants and perennials are also enviably robust—among them, peony, phlox, astilbe, yarrow and bee balm (*Monarda*), along with a variety of ferns, grasses and sedges.

Unlike the Pacific Northwest, which gets most of its rainfall in cooler months, the Midwest gets most of its rainfall in the warmer months. Cleveland gets two to three times more rain in the summer than Seattle does. In winter, it gets



LEFT: A classically axial garden design from Depression-era landscape architect L.D. Taylor. **RIGHT:** Curvilinear drifts of plants, rolling topography and contemporary art are modernist elements in a condominium garden overlooking Cleveland's Cuyahoga River.

100 years ago. One garden in Shaker Heights, a tree-lined suburb of Cleveland, adheres to the classically axial plan created by landscape architect L.D. Taylor in the years 1929-1932 and retains the extensive stonework executed by master craftsmen of the era.

A recently completed garden on a property sloping to Lake Erie was designed to reflect the Italianate architecture of the home, but classical elements combined with modernist touches make the garden thrilling rather than stuffy. Classical statuary stands shoulder to shoulder with Italian cypress and other narrow conifers, with Lake Erie as a backdrop. Other gardens employ color, drifts of plants, contouring and contemporary art to move a garden beyond the traditional envelope.

Handsome Hedges

As a fan of hedges, I appreciate the hedges in Cleveland gardens, which vary in form from straight and narrow to curvilinear and serpentine. Boxwood, yew, grasses and other plants are used to create striking borders and walls.

Cleveland Rocks

Ohio was blessed with abundant native sandstone. Indeed, the motto of Amherst, Ohio,

about 35 miles west of Cleveland, is "Sandstone Center of the World"! Although sandstone can still be appreciated throughout the natural landscape, particularly along rivers, much of the indigenous stone has been quarried nearly to "extinction." Nonetheless, much of it, particularly old curbstone, is still being used—reused and repurposed—in Cleveland landscapes.

Why Cleveland? Why Not?

It's hard to imagine that Cleveland will become a destination city anytime soon—in the way that New York, San Francisco, Chicago, Washington, DC, etc., are. Cleveland has many of the attributes of those iconic cities, although its scale is smaller, with a population base closer to that of Seattle. On the other hand, one shouldn't be deterred by its "Rust Belt" reputation—there is no reason to exclude Cleveland from a list of places to visit, and many good reasons to include it. ∞

JANINE ANDERSON, CPH, is a landscape designer (www.anderson-design.net), long-time Arboretum guide and member of the "Bulletin" Editorial Board.

Sawdust Gardening and Mushroom Drawers:

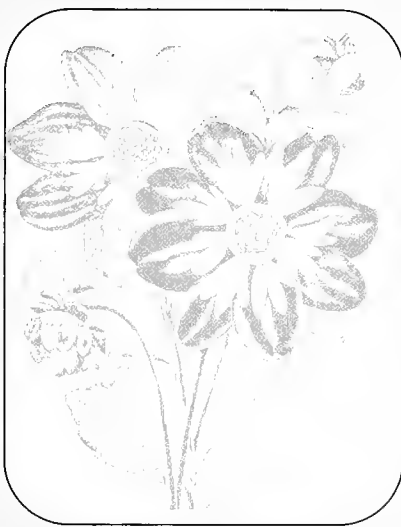
Early Pacific Northwest Treasures
from the Rare Books Collection at
the Elisabeth C. Miller Library

BY LIISA WIHMAN

The supply of glossy, deliciously illustrated books about all things related to gardening seems endless today. Whatever your interest—design, colors, low-maintenance gardening or edibles, amongst many others—there is a book targeting the subject, made available by the specialist gardening publishers of the Pacific Northwest.

Being new to the area (my history in Pacific Northwest reaches only 2½ years back), I've been perusing the lavish resources of the Elisabeth Miller Library to learn more about gardening here. As a garden historian, I've been interested not only in the newest editions, but also curious about what has been written before. Given the high quality of the present books, surely they must be the offspring of some excellent predecessors, I reasoned...

After discussions with curator Brian Thompson and some deep diving in the library's databases, I discovered to my surprise that the history of regional Pacific Northwest gardening books is quite short. The earliest came out in the 1930s, about eight decades after the new Euro-American settlement became established in the area. Before the 1930s, reports and books with regional focus were published, but they were either agricultural ones addressed to potential new settlers, like Wenatchee Commercial Club's temptingly title "Wenatchee, the Home of



the Big Red Apple: Where the Dollars Grow on Trees" (1908), or botanically-oriented floras, like botanist Thomas J. Howell's "A Flora of Northwest America" (1897-1903) that considerably increased knowledge of plants in the Pacific Northwest.

Region-specific books about gardening in the Pacific Northwest were published first in the 1930s; it seems that until then it was local

newspaper and magazine articles, and books published elsewhere, that satisfied the literary needs of gardeners. The first book to come out was "Pacific Northwest Garden Guide for the Puget Sound Country and Northern Oregon" by Charles J. Love (1933, Lowman and Hanford Company, Seattle). For his book, Charles J. Love used his 10 years' experience as a practical nurseryman. Like Cecil Solly in the 1940s, and Ciscoe Morris in our time, Love gave radio broadcasts about fruit trees, nursery stock, pruning and other subjects, and used his experience to address issues that either bothered or interested his customers and listeners

Love's book is very practically oriented, with no general information about the weather, geographical or soil conditions of the area. He gives advice for different plant groups, dividing his chapters into annuals, perennials, climbing plants, evergreens, and shade and flowering trees. Plants that get their own chapters are

rhododendrons and azaleas, which he tells us “have not yet gained the attention they deserve in Pacific Northwest gardens,” roses, peonies, chrysanthemums, iris, dahlias and heather; Love’s extra attention is a strong indicator of their existing or developing popularity as garden plants during the 1930s.



Besides plant information, Love deals with gardening and horticultural techniques, especially with growing edibles. In a chapter about herbs, the spirit of the economic depression of the 1930s shines through clearly. With great empathy, Love contemplates that “... these changing and interesting times, a new era in the formation, when call to the land is again asserting itself. (...) We have the same wealth we always had—more in fact than any other country on earth, but we have allowed that wealth to flow into one corner and our structure became unbalanced and toppled over. (...) Going back to the land is significant and will help distribute our great wealth to every nook and corner of our land. *Trade in your own locality with local men and watch the regaining of equilibrium.*” His words bear an almost uncanny reflection of our own economically distressed times and could be from any Farmer’s Market ad or locavore manifesto of today that stresses the importance of using locally grown produce.

Love devotes the last chapter to mushroom growing, a highly unusual contribution to gardening literature then and even later. Despite, admittedly, not having personal experience in the area, Love energetically advocates the benefits of mushroom cultivation, promising “almost daily a good mess” if his advice is followed. His method would well suit today’s recycling devotees: He recommends an old bureau as a cultivating device, with its drawers filled with a mixture of horse manure and good soil and inserted with mushroom spawn. When watered and closed, each drawer makes a perfect, dark bed from which mushrooms can be harvested for months to come. I wonder if his advice ever

caught any followers amongst the Pacific Northwest gardeners?

The second regional garden book to come out was “Garden—A Manual of Gardening for the Pacific Northwest” by Harriet Trumbull Parsons and Elizabeth Nowland Holmes (Lowman and Hanford Co., Seattle). Published in 1933, just after

Love’s book above, it consists of compiled writings from 1932-1933 in a paper called “The Garden.” Chatty in style, the book derives from many literary sources, and it is unclear what competence the writers had to take on their project. (I’ve found it difficult to find any references to them in other sources, besides a short obituary note for Harriet Trumbull Parsons in a 1991 issue of “American Alpine Journal,” which informs that she climbed the Cascades and the mountains of Sierra Nevada.)

The intended reader seems to be female, as in those days decoration of the home would probably have been her domain. Countless bits of advice, like these, were given for the month of October: “Plant grapefruit seeds now in attractive containers. Water well, and leave in a sunny place;” “The little tree plants are useful as mantel or table decorations for the winter;” and “This is a good time to start a sweet potato in water. Cut off the base and immerse the cut end. It makes a charming vine for training indoors.”

Many types of gardens get attention—vegetable, herb, winter, Japanese and Elizabethan gardens and family orchards all have their own chapters—but the advice is so general that the reader can’t have been better off after reading it. For the rented garden, the advice can be summarized to “Shrubs and plants which are your favorites, as well as bulbs, may be carried off with the rest of the household goods should you have to move,” which the tenant probably could have figured out by him or herself. Selected plants like holly, *Skimmia japonica*, snowdrop, mayflower, shamrock, *Tulipa clusiana*, forget-me-not, rhododendron (which again gets attention as an underutilized shrub in Pacific

Northwest gardens), columbine, nigella, iris, phlox, snapdragon and dwarf dahlia, all get their own short chapters. Why they have been singled out remains unclear, but I get a feeling that they are personal favorites of the writers. An interesting chapter is a list of recommended reading. It includes Love's book, above, and many works that have since become classics—like Gertrude Jekyll's "Home and Garden" (1901) and "Gardens for Country Houses" (1924), and the famous plant collector E.H. Wilson's "China, Mother of Gardens" (1929) and "Plant Hunting" (1927).

The foreword of "Garden—A Manual of Gardening for the Pacific Northwest" tells that the book will fill the need for a concise, practical garden book for the Pacific Northwest. But, while very pleasant, this book feels more like a reading for dark winter evenings in front of the fireplace than one to pick up when in need of solutions for horticultural problems; here, Love's book is clearly the winner.

The first of the many "Sunset Magazine" garden books in the collections is the "Complete Garden Book" from 1939 (Lane Publishing Co., San Francisco), edited by Richard Merrifield, with Norvell Gillespie as garden consultant. Taking on the whole Pacific West, this book is one of the first of countless "Sunset" publications, and it tackles a breadth of gardening issues from soil management, propagation and horticulture to garden design and plant selection. The copy in the rare books collections seems well-used, and gardening books by the "Sunset Magazine" have continued to be the favorites of many Pacific Northwest gardeners ever since. (Its contemporary successor, "Sunset Western Garden Book," seems to be the first book people mention whenever I ask about good, local reference books for gardening.)

"Our Garden Book," a collection of articles from "The Sunday Journal's Garden: The Home Magazine" in Oregon, came out in 1941 (Binford's & Mort, Portland). Being a collection of articles, it lacks the coherent structure of a book. Its



articles take up issues from general advice on landscaping and herb gardening to building greenhouses and garden pools. The writer of "Sawdust Gardening" devotes four pages of advice to covering one's garden with lightly decayed sawdust, a method that—according to him—is used by all too few people. The author ensures that when generously applied (five to six inches!) twice a year as a top dress on lawns and garden beds, sawdust will have wondrous effects on about everything from the quality of soil to water savings. Nothing is said, though, about the esthetically quite questionable results and the nitrogen-leaching effects on soil. Today, careful mulching is advised in most garden books, but pure sawdust gardening seems thankfully to have disappeared into the compost heap of neglected gardening practices.

"Our Garden Book" includes two interesting articles from a Pacific Northwest garden history perspective. The first of them is Sheba Hargreaves's text "Pioneer Herbalist," a long account of herbal practices and remedies used by the pioneer women in Oregon Country. Mrs. Hargreaves was the author of "The Cabin at the Trail's End" and other pioneer novels and, in the foreword, is described as one of the only authorities on the history of early gardens in Oregon. (How she got this authority is unclear). The second, "Wild Flowers" by James O. Cavanaugh, is about the wild flora of Oregon, and about collecting wild plants for the garden. Cavanaugh advises not to pick plants within 500 yards of highways, but otherwise his enthusiasm about gathering wild treasures for one's garden sounds inappropriate to the ears of today's conservation-oriented gardeners, who hopefully now only collect them on the memory cards of their cameras.

"Trees and Shrubs for the Pacific Northwest Gardens" was published in the middle of the turbulent WWII years in 1943 (Dogwood Press, Seattle). It was the first book written by John A. Grant, a horticulturist and landscape archi-

tect, and his wife Carol Grant, and remains a knowledgeable and delightfully written book about growing ligneous (woody) plants. None of the earlier books defined their region, despite using the term of Pacific Northwest, but the Grants do so with interest. In their book, they cover west of the Cascades—from southwestern British Columbia to northwestern California—and they drill down to regional conditions caused by exposure, air drainage and the mild currents of the Northern Pacific Ocean. Theirs is one of the best descriptions I've read of the geographic conditions and water, wind and weather patterns of the area, and it explains many eccentric traits of the climate here, like droughts in April to May that can be devastating to plants if ignored. As the Grants write, the climate in the Pacific Northwest is sadly misunderstood as being dripping wet for the greater part of the year, when in fact it has a clear division between wet and dry seasons, with over three-quarters of the annual rainfall falling between October and March.

The Grants have a deep understanding of the plant ecology and geography of their region. "Every plant has a personality" is their mantra for gardening, which the Grants apply to everything from pruning to plant selection. "Always preserve and accentuate the plant's natural habit of growth," they emphasize in their first book, and again five years later in their second book, "Pruning Is Simple" (1948, Frank McCaffrey Publishers, Seattle).

For selecting the right plants for the right places, they use the sensible rule of starting with those that are native to the region and best suited to its particular set of cultural conditions, and then complementing with plants that grow under similar climatic and cultural conditions in other parts of the world. Their list of suggested trees and shrubs is comprehensive and gives tips on evergreens, deciduous shrubs, trees and vines for all conditions from hot and dry to deep, moist shade. The choices feel distinctively "mid-



century modern," as evergreens like *Mahonia*, *Fatsia*, *Nandina* and *Pachysandra* get great attention. Flowering, deciduous shrubs are snubbed; the Grants describe them as not attractive in winter, stating that they should only be used where the permanent, year-round effect of evergreens is not needed. They

mention only a few "aristocrats of the garden" like *Magnolia stellata* and *Hamamelis mollis* as notable exceptions.

The Grants' book became a classic for Pacific Northwest gardeners, and a new edition, revised by some of the leading experts of the area, was published in 1990. This new edition reflected the huge increase in plant material available for gardeners, but also discouraged the use of some earlier recommendations that had become a nuisance or invasive.

In 1954, the Grants published one more book, "Garden Design Illustrated" (University of Washington Press, Seattle), which was intended to "open up possibilities through the understanding of naturalistic principles and more vivid awareness of the design potential of plant material itself." This well-illustrated book is an homage to asymmetrical balance, free-flowing contours and massed plantings, and a treasure for anyone interested in mid-20th century garden design, as it offers great guidance for homeowners who would like to recreate a garden that harmonizes with their modernist house.

Comparing these pioneers of Pacific Northwest gardening literature with new ones, the most striking difference is the visual layout of the books. Until color printing became affordable in the 1960s, most gardening books featured only black and white pictures or drawings, while early books relied exclusively on text to convey their advice and ideas (a practice that would probably be tedious for many readers today). The number of plants mentioned has increased steeply, mirroring the enormous horticultural and

Continued on page 29

A New Arboretum Collection Is an Open Door to Our History

BY CARRIE BOWMAN

The initial inspiration for the University of Washington Botanic Garden's oral history project came from a number of different sources. I trace my own first experience with the project to late 2007, when John Wott, among others, was pondering the idea. The Arboretum Foundation saw the value of collecting and preserving memories related to the history of our organization and funded this project in 2010. Today, four years later, the Elisabeth C. Miller Library houses a rich collection of interviews. In aggregate, they present answers to such important questions in the Arboretum's history as how visions of its mission and significance differed when funding was scarce.

What matters to an oral historian is the *collection* of memories, each providing a different perspective on an idea, an event or a span of time. Oral history captures an individual's experience of events, rather than particular facts about them. Oral historians recognize that memories fade with time and that memories of particular events differ from person to person. *Which* events are remembered, and a person's feelings about those events, are important. Alessandro Portelli says that oral history is not about events, but about their meaning: "Oral sources tell us not just what people did, but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, and what they now think they did..."¹ In this way, the layers of stories build,



and the events and the people become part of a larger narrative. Not only are individual stories valuable by themselves: The "mosaic" of memories reveals overlapping yet distinct perspectives, all of which contribute to a more complete understanding of history.² What were the motivations for decisions and actions? Can the underlying reasons be determined? What additional circumstances were in play? Oral history interviews can provide information that helps us understand the broader context of events and the subtle differences in the interpretations of them. Questions not answered directly are often answered in new ways through the reflec-

tions of the people interviewed. [For example, see several different perspectives on the importance of our Arboretum in the sidebar "(Listen to) what narrators have to say..."]

What is oral history?

[*Note:* The idea of oral history as an "open door" is not original to me. I first saw the term used in "Recording Oral History: A Practical Guide for Social Scientists" (Valerie Raleigh Yow, 1994), and I'm sure it is a term used by others as well.]

The practice of oral history includes recording as well as preserving a "verbal document" intended to contribute to the understanding of past events or periods of time. Oral historians are expected to uphold professional standards, including ethical obligations to the

¹ Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories*, 50

² See Portelli, *The Battle of Valle Giulia*, 88, for his description of the mosaic of individual experiences as it relates to the subjectivity of oral history

narrators (the people interviewed).ⁱⁱⁱ Narrators are given the opportunity to restrict access to all or part of their interviews. Interviewers recognize that questions, as well as the way in which they are framed, influence responses. In fact, the very presence of an interviewer can shape a narrator's memory of an event. With this in mind, an oral historian strives to open a door and then allow a narrator to explore and reflect. Narrators are free to attribute meaning to events and to introduce topics at will. Of course, a project must maintain focus, and the questions asked each narrator are relevant to his or her experience, but the desire to capture personal interpretations of events overrides a desire for answers to specific questions.

Finally, oral historians are committed to preserving a body of work—the collection of interviews—by securing the original interviews (that are saved in digital form, in our case), by creating back-up copies, and by offering additional unedited copies for public use. The public collection of interviews at the Miller Library is available to everyone.

The narrators have transferred copyright of their interviews to the University of Washington so that permission is not required each time someone wants to listen to an interview. Listeners can incorporate all or part of an interview into original work. The Miller Library, as the institution responsible for storing the interviews and providing access to them, monitors their use. The interviews are not available for

commercial purposes, and copies are not available for distribution.

The Library encourages people to adopt a critical approach to interpretation. Dr. Lorraine McConaghy, Historian at Seattle's Museum of History & Industry, recommends the rule of three: Consult three primary sources before drawing conclusions or creating an argument using material from an oral history interview. Oral history interviews tell only part of a story. Stacy Ericson of the Idaho Oral History Center notes that "...if we then integrate the oral source with other kinds of historical research, we can arrive at an account of past events which is human in its approach without sacrificing necessary accuracy."^{iv}

Our project

Shelly Leavens spent the past nine months interviewing people (See narrator inserts "The Narrators" and "(Listen to) What the Narrators Have to Say."). We sought narrators with long-term associations with the Washington Park Arboretum, the Arboretum Foundation and/or the Center for Urban Horticulture. We consulted many people, looking for narrators who fulfilled multiple roles within these organizations, as well as narrators from outside them, so that we could document a variety of perspectives about a past rapidly disappearing from our living memories.

The narrative created by our compilation—our collection—is an open door to our history. The intent of this phase of the project was to

ⁱⁱⁱ For a complete discussion of principles for oral history and best practices in the United States, see <http://www.oralhistory.org/do-oral-history/principles-and-practices/>

^{iv} Ericson, v

THE NARRATORS

Dick Brown
Barbara Carman
Dale Cole
Nancy Davidson-
Short
Marion Docter

Sylvia Duryee
Paul Gibson
Donald Graham, Jr.
Jean Haigh
Barbara Harris
Donald Harris

Grant Jones
Art Kruckeberg
Elizabeth Moses
Vincil Dean Powell
(not yet scheduled)
Lyn Sauter

Carol Simons
Shelia Taft
Harold Tukey
Jean Witt
John Wott

collect a variety of interviews, index them so that people can determine what was discussed, and organize them so that materials relevant to each interview are stored in one place. Research materials, field notes, indexes and narrator data sheets are all included with the interviews.

We encourage people with any interest, whether general or for a specific purpose, to consult the indexes and listen to the interviews. Each narrator gives meaning to his or her experiences; anyone who listens to the interviews can offer their own interpretation of the compiled memories. Though publications, displays and walking tours are typical outcomes for oral history projects, online or other media productions are more and more common. (A few are listed at the end of this article.)

We sincerely hope that with the addition of the interviews in our young oral history collec-

tion, listeners can begin to understand the process through which the University of Washington Botanic Gardens has developed and evolved.

If you would like to learn more about our oral history project, plan to visit the Miller Library, which will present a special display from mid-October until November 20. All are also welcome to attend an open house and reception on November 1 (5-7 p.m.) that will showcase the project and give people a chance to meet some of the narrators. Check the Miller Library Web site (millerlibrary.org) for details or call the library at (206)543-0415 for more information.

Examples of online oral history projects

British Library—Archival Sound Recordings

<http://sounds.bl.uk/>

Broadcastr (beta)—What's your story?

<http://beta.broadcastr.com/> (continues on next page)

(LISTEN TO) WHAT THE NARRATORS HAVE TO SAY...

OF WHAT VALUE IS OUR ARBORETUM?

Jean Witt—...The interesting thing about the Arboretum is that it's very well known internationally and underappreciated at home and this pattern has continued, but...even so, its situation is...lots better locally than it used to be...it makes it difficult...in some ways that it is an open park and because it gets uses that are not compatible...for instance, they have trouble with theft: a clump of double *Trillium ovatum* was swiped...

Jean Haigh—...Well, I really wanted to see groups of school children going through with some Arboretum person that was knowledgeable as well as their classroom teacher, so that was what I thought should happen, but it didn't happen during the time I was still teaching, I didn't see that...

Elizabeth Moses—...The Arboretum is more of a park...and it should be open as parks are, but it would be nice if we could charge...a reasonable fee...because we're so bare bones, we're so way under the standard of other arboreta across the country in the number of acres each person is responsible for taking care of...the Arboretum is an important resource, it's not just a piece of Volunteer Park or Seward Park, it's a study group and it's a very important scientific collection of plants...

Paul Gibson—...So you've got this institution which is unusual, it's some sort of hybrid. It's a museum of...woody plants, in a public park, and those are not the same thing...but they each have their constituency...the weight between these two uses, the constituency which is my constituency, the general park user constituency, is not represented nearly as well...as is the arboretum function and that constituency...

Art Kruckeberg—...Well, I think access to an arboretum shouldn't be through a gate. I think it should be through good intentions and freedom...the notion of a fence plus an admission fee was part of the projection, which we also rejected...I think you've picked the three elements that made it an invaluable city resource: people use it as a park, people use it as a learning device, and people use it as something to preserve.

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Arboretum Foundation

Center for Wooden Boats, Seattle—Oral Histories
<http://cwb.org/south-lake-union/online-museum/oral-histories>
http://theemptyroom.org/thesis/hotc_map.html
<http://cwb.org/south-lake-union/online-museum/oral-histories/history-craft-interviews-shipwrights-lake-union>
Denshō—The Japanese American Legacy Project
<http://www.densho.org/>
Imperial War Museum—IWM Collections Search
<http://www.iwmcollections.org.uk/qrySound.asp>
Laurelhurst Beach Club Sailing Fleet, Seattle
<http://lbc sailing.com/>
New York City Taxi Driver Oral History Project
<http://nyctaxisoralhistory.com/project/>
Project Jukebox—Alaska & Polar Regions Collections /
Elmer E. Rasmuson & BioSciences Libraries
(University of Alaska Fairbanks)
<http://jukebox.uaf.edu/site/>
University of Oxford—Diabetes Stories
<http://www.diabetes-stories.com/index.asp>
Voices—World Voices—Listen to the People!
<http://voices.com/>

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CARRIE BOWMAN has worked at the Elisabeth C. Miller since 2006. She also is a teen services librarian at the Seattle Public Library System. In one of her former lives she worked for 14 years as a gardener for Seattle Public Libraries. In another, she taught middle and high school biology and math. **SHELLEY LEAVENS**, primary interviewer on this project, has been conducting oral history based on research since 2004. A recent graduate of the Museology Graduate Program at the University of Washington, she now teaches in the U of W Museum Studies Certificate Program and contracts with various organizations.

A Tree Grows in Managua

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY DANIEL MOUNT



According to President Daniel Ortega, “in Nicaragua everybody is considered to be a poet until he proves to the contrary.” This certainly is true of Dr. Juan Bautistas Salas Estrada—botanist, author, poet and founder of the Arboretum Nacional in Managua.

Salas had spent over 50 years of his life studying the incredibly rich and diverse flora of his small country. Nicaragua is about two-thirds

the size of the state of Washington and lies at the center of Central America—the southernmost isthmian portion of North America, which first rose from the ocean as a chain of volcanic islands. In the late Cenozoic Era, about the same

time the Cascade Range came to its “modern” position, it became a sub-continental land mass. As it joined the two Americas, it precipitated a bio-geographical event called the Great American

ABOVE: Profs Carénas and Delgado with translator Michael Boudreaux.

INSET: Recently planted tree seedlings waiting to sprout in the open air “greenhouse.”



At the center of the intersecting paths of the arboretum.

Exchange that allowed plants and animals, long separated by water, to migrate into new territory.

Nicaragua is located at the center of this isthmus and has a topography much like our own—mountainous, volcanic, pocked with lakes and crisscrossed with rivers. It also enjoys a dry and a wet season similar to ours, only in reverse; winters are dry and summers are wet there. And Nicaragua is prone to the same cyclical climate fluctuations from El Niño and La Niña that we experience. But it is there that most similarities end. As part of the neotropics, one of the eight eco zones on Earth, which includes more tropical rain forest than any other ecozone and some of the most important reserves of biodiversity on the planet, it definitely differs. The average temperature ranges between 68 and 86 degrees, with yearly rainfall from 28 inches on the dry Pacific slope to nearly 250 inches in the southeastern rain forests. Managua lies at the center of the country's climatic variables and diverse topography on the plain situated between Lake Managua and Lake Nicaragua, about 400 feet

above sea level. At the center of the city—which, like most modern-growing cities, sprawls endlessly in many directions to accommodate the million plus inhabitants—flourishes the rather small arboretum of Juan Bautistas Salas Estrada. Its mere 3.7 fenced acres—hosting over 235 species of trees, most of which are native to Nicaragua—is part of the capital's governmental center, near many foreign embassies, and within walking distance of the National Palace.

It is no coincidence that Salas' arboretum, an idea he formed during his years working as director of INAFOR (Instituto Nacional Forestal) was placed so centrally in the capital. It serves not only as a cool and shady park in an urban area covered in concrete and buildings, but also as a visible metaphor for the new Nicaragua's interest in preserving its forests.

During the 45-year despotic rule of the Somoza family, over 60 percent of the forests of Nicaragua were destroyed and most of the trees felled and exported by multinational companies, leaving little or no economic benefit



Neem Tree seedling.

behind. After the revolution—which put the Sandanistas in power in 1979 and spawned a counterrevolution, a U.S. embargo, and many years of economic hardship for the Nicaraguans—the forests continued to suffer more predation, with many species on the brink of extinction. Today Nicaragua is enjoying more peaceful times and, with the re-election of former Sandinistan president Daniel Ortega, is taking on vast reforestation projects. Between 2006 and 2010, nearly 161,000 acres were reforested, while another 26,100 acres are proposed to be replanted in 2011. This is not a program by INAFOR alone, but collaboration between environmental groups from around the world, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, and about 467,000 Nicaraguan students. At the center of this furor of planting is the National Arboretum, the result of Salas's persistent love of trees despite revolutions, earthquakes and economic collapse. Salas—imprisoned by the new revolutionary government from 1979-1980, while his wife and daughter fled to the United

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LEFT: The strange young excrescent fruits of jicaro, *Crescentia cujete*.

RIGHT: Entrance to the visitor center with guava on the right.



States with visas from Somoza—refused to leave his country and the flora he loved, both with the heart of a poet and the astute mind of a researcher. Ten years later he was granted the Ramírez Goyena Medal, the highest honor for a scientist in Nicaragua, by President Daniel Ortega. Today he also carries the popular title of “Father of the Nicaraguan Environmental Movement.” Through all these ups and downs, he has remained politically neutral, reserving his passions for the forests of his homeland and his vision of creating a national arboretum. This vision was realized in 1991, when Arboretum Nacional Juan Bautistas Salas Estrada was opened.

But arboreta are not built by visions alone. So when it came time to start planting, Salas was there... shovel in hand. But it wasn't a native tree that he first planted; it was the neem tree (*Azadirachta indica*) from the Indian subcontinent that he planted among the rubble still left from an earthquake that had ravaged

the city in 1972. As I toured the arboretum with Professors Maria Ruth Carénas and Karla Patricia Delgado, and my partner and translator Michael Boudreaux, it was not hard for me to imagine the trees as a living memorial to the more than 5000 victims of the earthquake, many of whom were never found. The fast-growing neem created a shady enclave in which young native trees could be planted and protected in the harsh and dry urban environment. Though the neem trees have since been removed, seedlings still sprout up everywhere under the canopy of 20-year-old natives.

The park—designed with intersecting axial paths like a medieval Spanish garden—is divided into quarters (each representing one of the bioregions of the country), with the national tree, the endangered madroño (*Calycophyllum candidissimum*), at the center. When the two educators began our tour, I realized that I was not only getting a tour of the park and its collection of trees but also a tour of the country in



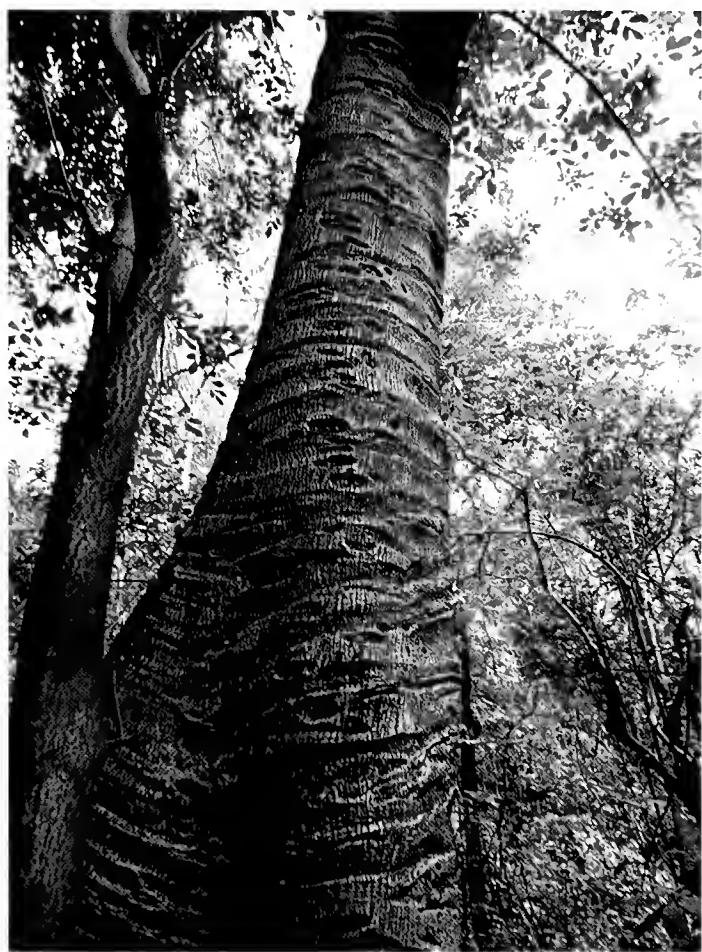
LEFT: Frequently-grown *Bambusa vulgaris* 'Vittata' is used extensively for construction.

RIGHT: The evergreen lidnum-vitae, *Guaiacum sanctum*.

microcosm. We began with the north-central bioregion of the country. This region is characterized by a mass of tangled ancient mountains and many extinct and eroded volcanos, with deep wet valleys and cloud-covered peaks. Rainfall can be from 40 to 80 inches a year, and on some of the higher peaks temperatures can drop as low as 40 degrees. It is a region that still has many representatives of the ancient temperate forests that moved southward during glacial and interglacial periods. The genus *Pinus* finds its southernmost distribution in these mountains, and remnant and endangered populations of sweet gum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*) grow at high elevations, along with other common genera of the north like *Quercus*, *Alnus* and *Carpinus*. One tree found throughout the neotropics, but which is very common in the wet valleys of this region, is jiñocuabo (*Bursera simaruba*)—known as the tourist tree, due to its thin, peeling, red bark that looks like a tourist's sunburnt skin. It is frequently seen as

a living fence post in coastal areas, where it is used as a wind block for crops and cattle.

The Pacific region was the second region on our tour. Since most of the rains and winds originate in the east, over the warm Caribbean, this vast, low-elevation plain in the rain shadow of the central mountains is the driest region. It is also the most densely inhabited region of Nicaragua, with greatly disturbed ecosystems. When Christopher Columbus arrived on the east coast of Nicaragua in 1502, there was a large population of Amerindians on the Pacific plains who were already modifying the natural environment. As the Spaniards decimated these great populations, the forests returned for a short period—until Spanish colonization grew, and once again the forests were felled for construction lumber and firewood, and to create pastures for the newly introduced cattle. Today this zone—a vast hilly plain with a backdrop of 25 volcanos, some crowned with cloud forest and seven still active—receives only 28 to 60



LEFT: The scarred trunk of Panama rubber tree, *Castilla elastica*, in Chocoyero Nature Preserve in the Sierras de Mangua outside Managua.

RIGHT: Bark of Madroño, *Calycophyllum candidissimum*, the national tree at the center of the arboretum.

inches of rain a year, most of which falls from March to October. The flora is dominated by grasses and forbs that have colonized deforested or burned lands. Many naturally reforested areas in this zone are dominated by introduced species in a matrix of reduced natives. In the arboretum, guayacán (*Guaiacum sanctum*), or lignum-vitae, is one of the prized specimens representing this region. Harvested to near extinction for its hard, dense wood, it is now listed as endangered in most of its range, which includes southern Florida. As one of the few trees of the Pacific slope that remains evergreen and has beautiful, blue flowers, it is a frequently planted ornamental, but is found less and less in the wild.

We moved from the driest region to the largest and the wettest—the Atlantic region—in a few steps. It has no marked dry season like the Pacific slope. This plain is relatively new, geologically speaking, and formed by erosion

on the central mountains. It is crossed by numerous, wide, voluminous rivers, which form large, swampy deltas where they meet the Caribbean. Except for one small, pine-covered, sandy zone in the Northeast, this region is true tropical rainforest with tall, straight-trunked trees covered in lianas and epiphytes. It is also home to the 3.45 million-acre Bosawás Biosphere Reserve, the largest bioreserve in Central America. You can still find there the once abundant caoba (*Swietenia macrophylla*), the highly prized mahogany, represented by a small lone specimen in the arboretum. Strangely this species, endangered in its native habitat, has become dangerously invasive in the Philippines and Sri Lanka.

Our official tour ended with the Central region, the transition zone between the other three regions. It is the region in which Managua is situated and is drier than the two tropical zones, yet wetter than the Pacific zone.

Dominated by the Sierras de Managua to the west, the Central region is a major coffee-growing region, with poor and rocky soils and scrubby native trees. One particularly interesting tree in the arboretum from that region is jícaro (*Crescentia cujete*), the calabash tree. It was the only tree flowering in the park when we were there at the end of the winter dry season. Its odd flowers, springing from the trunk, have a foul smell and attract bats as pollinators. The large, woody fruits—excrecent swellings of the wood—are used for making decorative items, and the high-in-protein seeds are ground and added to the traditional Latin American drink horchata. Its adaptability to dry soils and use as a fodder for cattle has increased interest in this often overlooked tree. Another important tree native to this region is palo de hule (*Castilla elastica*), or the Panama rubber tree, milked since Pre-Columbian times for its rubber-producing sap and used today for making balls.

Beyond being a center for education and a beautiful bit of shade at the heart of the city, the arboretum produces large quantities of saplings for local reforestation projects. Hundreds of trees, started from seed each year in the arboretum's open air "greenhouse," are planted at schools and parks throughout the region. Some useful non-native plants, like common bamboo (*Bambusa vulgaris* 'Vittata'), pineapple (*Ananas comosus*) and guava (*Psidium guajava*) are also growing in these nursery gardens surrounding the offices and visitor center. The love in which this arboretum is held is evident in the high level of staffing. Besides professors Carénas and Delgado, who lead tours and teach classes, there are three gardeners and two guards, all under the direction of director Roberto Domínguez Hernández of INAFOR. Salas' creation has also inspired the poetic side of Professor Delgado, who wrote the official song of the arboretum. In



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The Arboretum Nacional Juan Batistas Salas Estrada: An urban oasis.

“Cancion Arboreto Nacional” her sweet voice entices visitors to enjoy the arboretum and thanks Salas for leaving them “a little green forest.”

Though our visit to the arboretum was a brief two hours, it ended up being an important introduction to a flora and a country we would be seeing for the first time. While we travelled on through rainforests, cloud forests and coffee plantations, and lounged on coconut palm-covered beaches, the New Zealanders in Christchurch were still searching the rubble of their earthquake for survivors, the Egyptian revolutionaries had ousted their despot, and the earthquake and subsequent tidal wave hit Japan. There were tremors moving through the Nicaraguans, too, as they remembered the horrors and travails of their own revolution and earthquakes. But I couldn't help but notice the

joy in their faces at having these hard times behind them, as if they were listening to the kind words of Salas when he said in his later years, “I have nothing against anyone, against anything that happened. I can be peaceful any place, without worry and that is a great sustenance in life.” This man has inspired a young generation of environmentally conscious Nicaraguans with his fatherly words and his peaceful arboretum, as they reforest their country one tree at a time. ☺

DANIEL MOUNT received a BSLS - Botany degree from the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee. He currently works as an estate gardener in the Seattle area. Read his thoughts on gardening on his blog, daniel-mountgarden.blogspot.com.



The Arboretum Foundation's Outstanding Display Garden at the 2011 Flower and Garden Show Is Featured in a "Christian Science Monitor" Article

Since the beginning of the Pacific Northwest Flower and Garden Show, one of its special features has been the large display garden the Arboretum Foundation designs and installs each year. Some of the Pacific Northwest area's foremost landscape designers have participated in these projects.

In 2011, Roger Williams of Roger Williams Architect/Design/Photography and a member of the Arboretum Foundations Board of Directors, Phil Wood of Phil Wood Gardens and a member of the Arboretum "Bulletin" Editorial Board, and eminent plantsman and longtime Arboretum volunteer Bob Lilly came together to design a garden in honor of the 50th anniversary of the Arboretum's Japanese Garden.



Crediting Bob Lilly with bringing the garden alive with plants and Roger Williams with a deep knowledge of Japanese gardens based upon his years of working in Japan, Phil Wood says they all sought to express the essence of our Japanese garden in their design. "Bob and Roger were invaluable, and always a pleasure to work with" he said.

The garden won the 2011 Flower and Garden Show silver medal and caught the interest of Mary-Kate Mackey, a writer for the "Christian Science Monitor." See the article at <http://csm.com/The-culture/Gardening/digging-it/20110625/A-small-water-feature-makes-a-big-impact-the-right-plants>. ∞



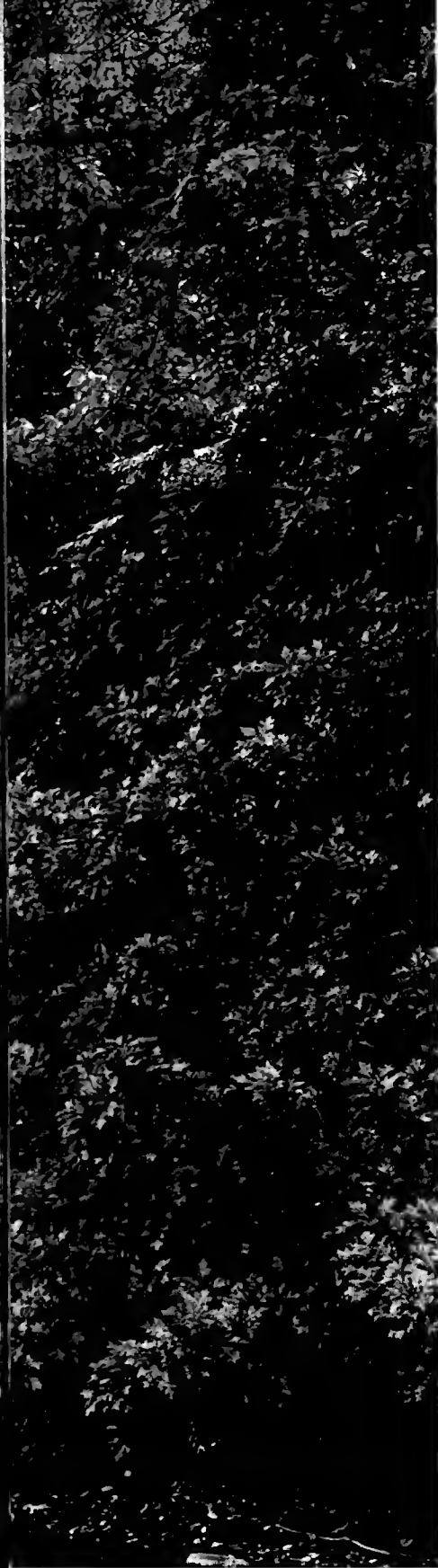
Jeff Krewson's Autumn Arboretum

"I have photographed in the Arboretum for well over 22 years now and during that time have never ceased to be inspired by the things I see."

—Jeff Krewson.

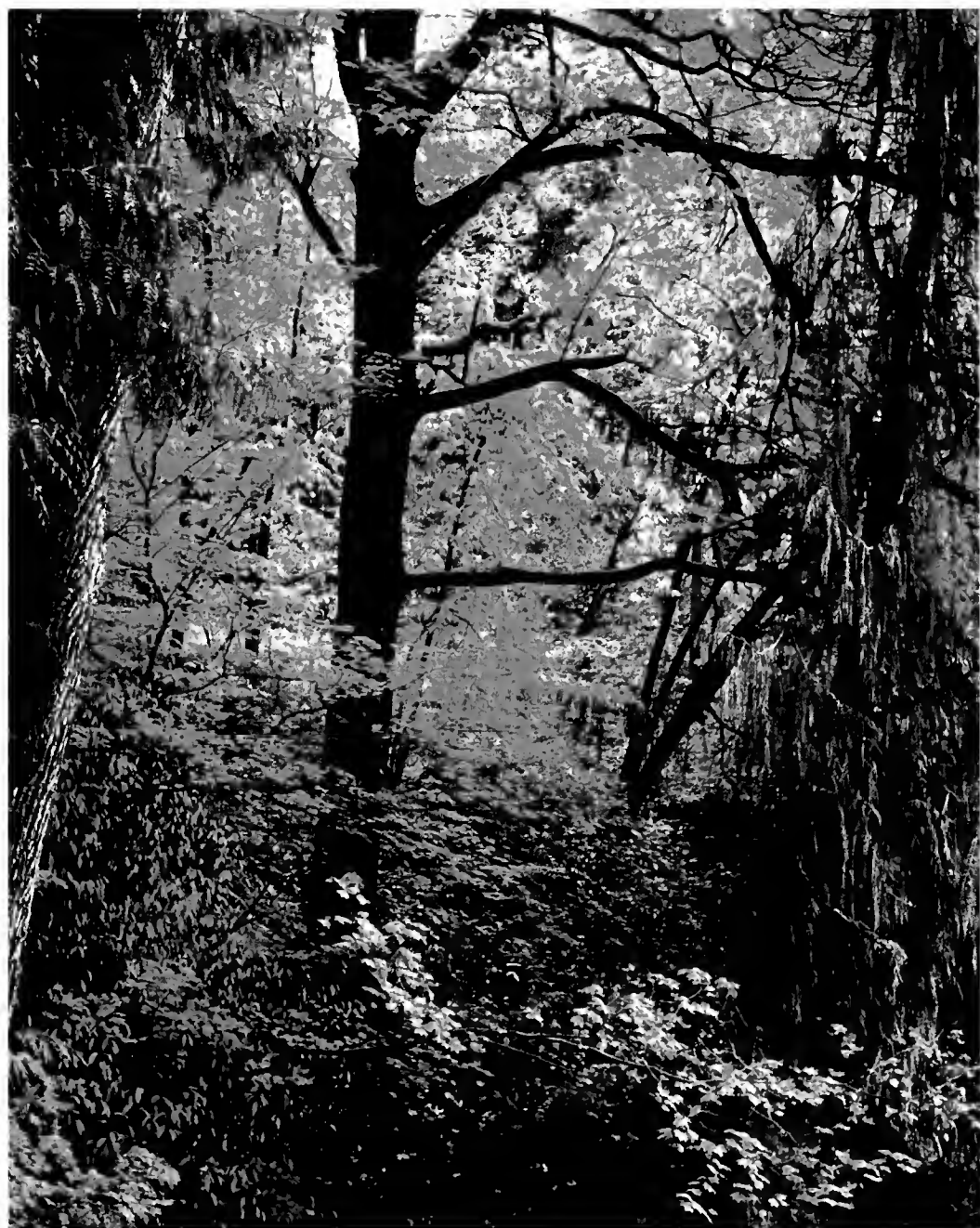
For more images of the Arboretum, visit www.jeffkrewson.com/arboretum.htm

ABOVE "Here I saw the white trunks of the two main trees as anchoring the composition."



TOP RIGHT: "The riot of texture receding into the distance enhanced by the soft light of an overcast day left me with yet another keeper."

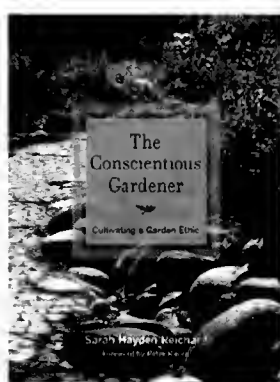
RIGHT: "This composition was found at the end of the Lake Washington Boulevard footbridge. I was especially drawn by the quality of the light paired with the dark contrast of the center of the tree bark."



Annual Review of New Books by Pacific Northwest Authors

BY BRIAN R. THOMPSON

*Look for these books at the Graham Visitors Center gift shop
or the Elisabeth C. Miller Library*



A Garden Ethic

Sarah Reichard, the recently appointed director of the University of Washington Botanic Gardens, is also the author of an important new book for gardeners: “The Conscientious Gardener: Cultivating a Garden Ethic.” (In reviewing this book, I must make a full disclosure—Sarah is also my new boss and someone I’ve known and worked with for many years.)

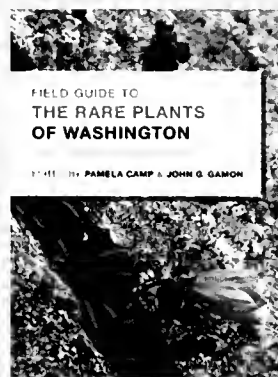
Hopefully you have read the essay excerpted from the book in the Summer 2011 issue of the “Bulletin.” This is an excellent introduction to the author’s motivations and goals for writing the book. She rightfully challenges gardeners to think outside of our individual gardens and see our role in the bigger system of both human endeavors and the natural world—also to see both the good and bad we can do.

But I fear, if you only read this essay, you’ll be missing a lot of the fun and encouragement that Reichard brings to her writing. She knows that being “good” isn’t easy! And being a long-time teacher, she uses a skillful blend of storytelling, humor and breaking things down into easy steps to make her message understood but not overwhelming.

For example, in her chapter “Aliens Among Us”, Reichard begins with the story of her concerns about introducing invasive plant species during a seed-collecting trip early in her career.

The scarcity of existing research led her to become a leader in the study of what makes plants invasive and the establishment and advocacy of guidelines for plant introductions in horticulture.

Recounting all this could be pretty heavy going, but she keeps it succinct and lightened with side boxes, such as the role of the automobile (“Driving the Daisy”) in seed dispersion. Then, she both encourages, (“Gardeners, take action!”), and tells how to do it, (“Read on to plan your attack!”) Like all chapters, this one ends with a set of guidelines, very practical and doable steps each of us can take.



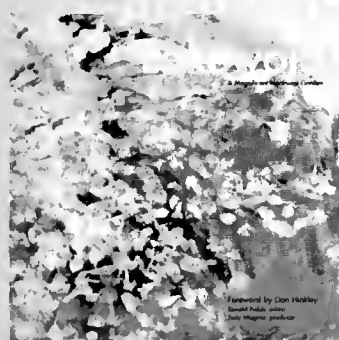
Guide to Rare Plants

Most field botany guides help with identifying the most common trees, shrubs and wildflowers. “Field Guide to the Rare Plants of Washington” takes a very different approach by choosing as its subjects over 300 of the rarest plants, ferns and lichens in the state.

Why do this? Editors Pamela Camp and John G. Gamon, and the many contributors, anticipate that helping both professional and amateur botanists to recognize and identify rare plants, will promote conservation of these plants. The hope is also to engage more “...nature enthusiasts, opening a window into the beauty and diversity of Washington’s rare flora.”

That said, this book takes a solid base of botanical knowledge to appreciate. Selections are arranged alphabetically by genus within four broad plant types (lichens, ferns, dicots and monocots). This means you must identify an unknown plant to the genus level before you can make use of the detailed plant and habitat descriptions to determine if you've found something rare. Most entries have line drawings and both close-up and site photographs, but these are for fine-tuning identification and not for the beginner.

Besides its value to the keen botanists, this book makes an important contribution to keeping pace with changes in taxonomy and nomenclature and linking different resources for this information. For example, each entry includes the name (if different) used in the standard reference "Flora of the Pacific Northwest" (Hitchcock and Cronquist, 1973). It also preserves, in a book format much information that was only available in "...earlier loose-leaf and online treatments of many the species included..."



Lakewold

Among my favorites of recent new books is "Lakewold: A Magnificent Northwest Garden." It reminds me of a well-crafted exhibit catalog,

beginning with detail from an oil painting of the garden on the cover.

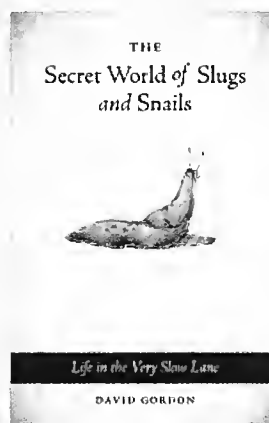
Inside, a rich history of photographs—dating from the early 20th century and drawing from most decades since then—tell the story of a dynamic garden. As a gardener, I appreciated seeing the old and the new, the changes and what stayed, and the large scale, formal plantings that gave way to simpler plans.

The style and quality of the book is not surprising as the editor is Ronald Fields, Emeritus Professor of Art History at the University of Puget Sound, who has been a docent for Lakewold since it opened to the public in 1989. The choice and layout of

photographs is quite engaging and includes unexpected hardscape details, many close-ups of signature plants, and the people who shaped the garden—primarily Eulalie Wagner and Thomas Church.

Several short essays provide their own history, including those written by local horticultural luminaries Valerie Easton, Dan Hinkley and Steve Lorton, recounting visits to Lakewold early in their careers. Other sections highlight the vitality of the garden that continues today and its importance amongst the great estate gardens in the country.

If nothing else, this book will make you want to visit Lakewold. We are very fortunate to have this garden close by, open to the public, and continuing the vision and spirit of those who developed and shaped it.



Slugs and Snails—Yuck!

David George Gordon wrote a delightful booklet (48 pages) in 1994 titled "Field Guide to the Slug." After chuckling over the concept, I found there was a lot of information packed in those few pages.

"The Secret World of Slugs and Snails" greatly expands the earlier work by not only including snails, but also the natural and cultural histories—yes, including cooking suggestions and even shell collecting—of these incredible creatures. For the even more adventurous, there is a short essay on keeping slugs as pets. For example, banana slugs have a good temperament for this (the author has a pair named Chiquita and Dole), but they will overheat in the typical household.

The final chapter is where most gardeners might begin: "Sharing Our Gardens: Coexisting with Slugs and Snails." But, unlike in most gardening books, it does not portray slugs and snails as an indisputable enemy. Yes, there are suggestions on how to both discourage and eliminate them, but the gardener is urged to

have a heart and not apply salt as "...salting causes undue pain for the slug."

In early 2012, an exhibit of drawings that enhance the book—done by the author's wife, Karen Luke Fildes—will be on display at the Elisabeth C. Miller Library. Gordon will give a reading from his book at the opening reception. Watch for dates to be posted on the library Web site (www.millerlibrary.org).

Color in the Garden

The Gardener's Color Palette at first glance is a pretty book, but I was prepared to dismiss it as having little information of consequence. However, like with most books, it is important to read the author's introduction. Tom Fischer's second sentence summarizes his intent: "Flowers are nature's most direct and accessible route to enjoying the pure pleasures of color."

As an experienced gardener, I was already familiar with almost all of the 100 flowers (mostly herbaceous perennials) profiled. I know their

size, habits, foliage, texture and even fragrance, or lack of one. And color, of course. Or so I thought. Fischer, and the superb photographs of Clive Nichols, invite you to isolate color from all other qualities.

This is best done on the beginning page of each of the 10 color groups, with thumbnail-style, tight close-ups of the full-view examples that follow. Here, the shape of the flower is gone; all that is left is the color. It's quite a change in perspective.

The text gives a brief but insightful and often witty description of each plant, but the most valuable advice is for suggested companions, complimentary color ranges, or little gems like this entry on joe-pye weeds: "Their pinks and purples have a slightly dusty quality, which isn't necessarily a drawback; in fact, a hot fuchsia joe-pye weed would be terrifying—what on earth would you do with it?"

Briefly

Two audio/visual programs about the 50th anniversary (in 2010) of the Japanese Garden have been added to the Miller Library archives. "Thru the lens: 50 years of the Japanese Garden" is a nearly hour-long documentary that explores both the history and current activities in the garden. Several docents, gardeners and supporters are interviewed. I found the in-depth presentation of the tea ceremony particularly interesting.

A stroll through the first 50 years of the Seattle Japanese Garden is a PowerPoint presentation with slides and narration, focused on the founding of the garden—with many historical photographs—and significant changes up to the present. Both documentaries have a limited availability, but can be viewed with headsets at the Miller Library.

"Cottonwood and the River of Time" by Rienhard Stettler, explores an unlikely topic, cottonwood trees and their kin, including poplars and aspens. A retired University of Washington professor of forestry, the author writes an engaging natural history beginning with a single



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tree, an old matriarch near the Snoqualmie River. While eventually global in scope, many of the examples continue to be set in the Pacific Northwest.

While many of the titles from the middle chapters may look a bit dull (e.g., “Natural Hybridization” and “Adaptation and Its Limits”), the writing is quite engaging and aimed at a general audience. The book concludes with the cultural history of poplars—their importance in agriculture, forestry and landscapes.

The keen observer of new publications will note here the lack of reviews for the many (at least eight!) new books on edible plants and kitchen gardens by Pacific Northwest authors. They deserve their own collective review, and that will appear in the next “In a Garden Library” column. ♡

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Sawdust Gardening and Mushroom Drawers

Continued from page 10

botanical interest and the equivalent increase in supply from commercial and specialist nurseries since the mid-1900s. While plants mentioned by Trumbull Parsons, Nowland Holmes and Love in the 1930s can be counted in tens or hundreds, the current books deal with thousands of them; the newest edition of the “Sunset” western gardening book takes up over 8000, even if many of them are for other regions than the Pacific Northwest.

Published during the severe recession of the 1930s, the earliest books give clever recycling tips—like planting seeds in eggshells and paper cups and using old drawers for mushroom cultivation, all of which would appeal to today’s environmentally oriented kitchen gardeners. Otherwise, despite their often knowledgeable writers, most of these early books are far too general in their advice to be of interest for today’s gardeners, who are accustomed to getting specialized expertise on a wide range of subjects. It is not surprising that only “Trees and Shrubs for Pacific Northwest Gardens” and the “Sunset Magazine” books have come out in new editions. As for the others, their greatest appeal might be as historic documents for readers who are curious about plants and gardening practices during earlier days in the Pacific Northwest. ♡

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